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HORACE.

BOOK IV. ODE IX.

To Lollius.

ARGUMENT.

Though Homer still must swing in the highest sphere,
Not therefore we, the lesser men, fall and die.

—Great heroes were ere Agamemnon,
Failing of fame that they lacked the poet.

—But shalt thou not be wronged by oblivion;
With me thou shalt be famous for evermore.

—The happy man is not the wealthy;
Happier greatness of mind and spirit.

ODE.

Think not the words shall be forgot which I,
Born by the far-resounding Aufid's shore,
Am singing to the chorded harmony
By arts unknown before.

To Homer though the foremost place belongs,
Still Pindar's and the Cæan muse are known;
Alcæus fierce, Stesichorus' grave songs,
And stately still we own.

What once in joy Anacreon may have sung,
Time not destroys; the love yet springs, the fire
Of the Lesbian maid will be forever young,
Once given to the lyre.

Laconian Helen not alone has loved
The adulterer's sleek locks; nor could restrain
The wonder that his gold-bound vestments moved,
His regal state and train.

Nor on the Cretan bow to draw the dart
Was Teucer first, nor Troy but once o'er thrown;
And battles worthy of the Muses' art
Not Sthenelus alone.

Nor great Idomeneus have fought; nor brave,
Eager Deiphobus, nor Hector wild
And warlike, first bore heavy wounds to save
His virtuous wife and child.

Brave men there were ere Agamemnon's day,
And many; but the darkness of long night
Oppresses them, unwept, unknown; for they
Want the bard's sacred light.

There's little choice between long idle sloth
And virtue that's unrecognized; so I,
To leave you in my lines unpraised am loth,
Or pass you silent by.

I will not see unkind forgetfulness
Destroy at ease so many works of thine;
Thou hast a mind where wise judiciousness
And upright truth combine,

Unchanged in good or ill; the avenger thou
Of greedy fraud, untouched by magnet gold;
Not consul for a single year, but now
And always him we hold

The ruler good and faithful, who still takes
The honest ere the expedient; who with wrath
Rejects the guilty bribe, and victor, breaks
Through hosts opposed, his path.

Whose wealth is great you would not rightly call
The happy man; more truly his the name
Who learns to use what gifts the gods let fall,
And wisely; who can claim

Courage and strength to bear hard poverty,
Less dreading death than foul dishonour's brand,
Not fearful for his well-loved friends to die,
Nor for his fatherland.

P. H. SAVAGE.